/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

/159/ Death; Burial Rites

761

Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity.

795 In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus [619] set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimɛ (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmɛ (grave-diggers), some others wasimɛ (bathers of the dead).

767 787 Kisimɛ and ɔlɔmɛ. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmɛ and kisimɛ constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/159 cont./

767 964 [466] --The kisimɛ command the village during the whole time the coffin is being made and can requisition anyone to help them;

--The ɔlɔmɛ are masters of the river while their work lasts. In particular they can requisition travelers passing through to help them, and even confiscate their provisions. This is ptisi, a joke. But as Mr. W. F. Van Lier also has us observe, this custom has a deep meaning; it reminds everyone that participation in the burial of a dead person is a fundamental religious duty.

767 467 The organization of these customary societies is, at least among the Boni, very rudimentary.

In each village there is a head of the ɔlɔmɛ who is acquainted with the topography of the cemetery and the rites to be carried out (bedemɛ fu ɔlo).

In Boniville, in 1958, this was Bukuman (Papalston);
In Loka, Tabikiɾ, not replaced at the beginning of 1958;
In Asisi, Antonu (Awara Bakka).

If he is absent, someone is sent to get the head of the ɔlɔmɛ of another village.

Likewise, in each village there is a head of the kisimɛ:
In Boniville, this was Fintiman (Dju);
In Asisi, it was Boofo (Awara Bakka);
In Kormotibo, it was Aténi. /160/

764 476 The people willingly lend one another assistance from one village to the other, with no need even to ask for help, and even if it is a question of burying a foreigner in the country, a Saramaka or a Djuka for example, who dies in Boni country.

767 467 [152] For the making of the coffin it is rare not to find about 15 kisimɛ spontaneously met together when four or five would be enough. They like this labor very much, which proceeds in an atmosphere of joyous over-excitement in the center of admiring spectators.